

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 7, 2024

2nd Sunday of Easter

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ."

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Renee Keiper

JOYS AND CONCERNS – Please share!

FRIENDSHIP PAD – Please sign and include any contact info updates.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

(L) We have been freed!

(ALL) Fear and death have no claim on us!

(L) Christ the Lord is risen!

(ALL) Even though we have not touched his wounded hands, yet we believe.

(L) Even though we are slow to listen, yet we believe.

(ALL) Let us celebrate God's love through the life of Jesus Christ. He is risen indeed!

OPENING HYMN *Every Promise of Your Word

From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun,

I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Words of power, strong to save, that will never pass away,

I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

For Your covenant is sure, And on this I am secure—

I can stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

When I stumble and I sin, condemnation pressing in,

I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

You are faithful to forgive that in freedom I might live,

So I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Guilt to innocence restored, You remember sins no more—

So I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice, I will listen for Your voice,

And I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Through this dark and troubled land You will guide me with Your hand

As I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

And You've promised to complete Ev'ry work begun in me—

So I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Hope that lifts me from despair, love that casts out ev'ry fear,

As I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Not forsaken, not alone, for the Comforter has come,

And I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

Grace sufficient, grace for me, Grace for all who will believe—

We will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of Resurrection surprises, open our hearts this day to the presence of Jesus Christ. Erase our excuses for unbelief, and exchange them for strong witness to the power of your mercy and love. Give us courage and challenge us to listen, speak and walk the path of discipleship, knowing that Jesus goes before us, leading and guiding our steps. In his name, we pray. **Amen**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Patient Lord, you wait for us to understand. You wait for us to remove the blinders of prejudice, fear, unbelief, confusion. You have offered to us the greatest miracle of all time, the resurrection of Your Son Jesus Christ. We sang and celebrated last Sunday, but a week has passed and we have slid back into our old ways of perceiving your presence and love. Shake us up, Lord! Shake us up and cause us to look with new eyes on our Savior, who came that we might have life, abundantly serving all who are in need. Forgive our stubbornness and our complacency. Reach out to us so that we may reach out with healing words and listening ears love to others, for we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

We have an advocate with God – Jesus Christ, the righteous one – who offered his life in love to save the world from sin. This is the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Staci Gower

"THE PASSING OF THE PEACE"

OFFERING – Basket located on table in the rear of the sanctuary.

INVITATION

Remember the first believers who shared one heart and soul, held their possessions in common and distributed them to all in need. In that same spirit, let us present our offerings at the feet of the risen Lord.

OFFERTORY***Amazing Grace***

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come.
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun.*

***DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

Holy God, we give you thanks and praise for light and life and love, and above all the presence of the living Lord among us. By your spirit who breathes within us, strengthen our faith, use our gifts, and work in our lives to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ our Lord, in who name we pray. **Amen**

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE**Stella Jean Christiansen****Responsive Reading: Psalm 133:1-3**

(L)How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

(ALL) **It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.**

(L) It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 50:4-10 Pew Bible pg 594

***The Gloria Tibi:** *Glory be to thee, O Lord*

***New Testament Reading: John 20:19-31 Pew Bible pg 883**

***Laus Tibi:** *Praise be to thee, O Christ*

**SERMON "A life of faith through listening ears and a careful tongue"
Pastor Tom Albright****THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION See insert*****THE LORD'S PRAYER – ALL****Led by Pastor Tom**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN**Facing a Task Unfinished (We Go To All the World)***

Facing a task unfinished, that drives us to our knees.
A need that, undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease.
We, who rejoice to know Thee, renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and make Thee known.

Where other lords beside Thee hold their unhindered sway;
Where forces that defied Thee, defy Thee still today.
With none to heed their crying for life, and love, and light,
Unnumbered souls are dying And pass into the night.

We go to all the world, with kingdom hope unfurled.
No other name has power to save but Jesus Christ The Lord.

We bear the torch that, flaming, fell from the hands of those
Who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.
Ours is the same commission, the same glad message ours;
Fired by the same ambition, to Thee we yield our powers.

We go to all the world, with kingdom hope unfurled.
No other name has power to save but Jesus Christ The Lord.

O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired,
Saviour, whose love constrained them to toil with zeal untired.
From cowardice defend us, from lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us to labour for Thy sake.

We go to all the world, with kingdom hope unfurled.
No other name has power to save but Jesus Christ The Lord. (2x)

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Pastor Tom

Let your life be a sign of Christ's life so that others may come to believe that the Lord is risen indeed. **Amen**

***CONGREGATIONAL SONG RESPONSE - ALL** *Go Now In Peace*

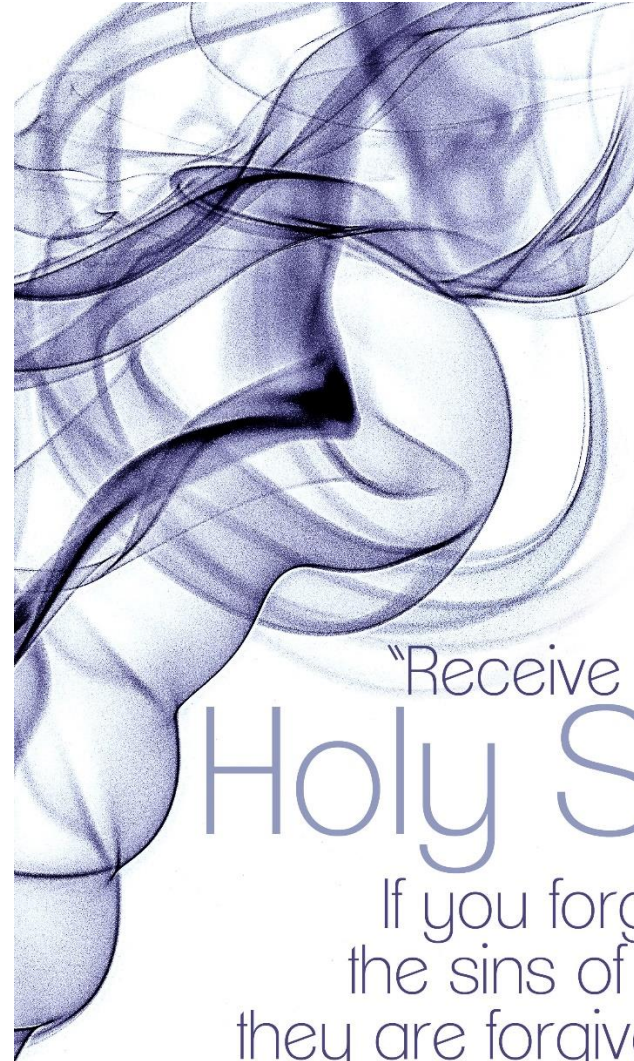
Go now in peace; never be afraid, God will go with you each hour of every day. Go now in faith, steadfast, strong, and true. Know He will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you believe, reach out to others, so all the world can see. God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith and in love. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

(CCLI #2810357 Don Besig)

***POSTLUDE**

***INDICATES THAT YOU STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE**



“Receive the
Holy Spirit.

If you forgive
the sins of any,
they are forgiven them;
if you retain
the sins of any,
they are retained.”

John 20:22-23, NRSV

The Week Ahead

Sunday, April 7	2 nd Sunday of Easter	-Sanctuary, 9:00am
Monday, April 8		-Office Open 10am – 2pm
	Exercise Group	-Gathering Room, 10:30am
Wednesday, April 10		-Office Open 10am - 2pm
Thursday, April 11		-Office Open 10am - 2pm
	Exercise Group	-Gathering Room, 10:30am
Sunday, April 14	3 rd Sunday of Easter	- Sanctuary, 9:00am
	Guest Preacher – Jason Parsons	

April Lead Usher – Diann Bittenbender

Altar Flowers

Vase #1 In loving memory of Ruby Frantz from her family.

Vase #2 In loving memory of Gene from Diann

Prayer Concerns

Beverly Frantz, John Blundetto, Jessica Speer, Tom and Lee Byrne, Barbara Souders, Rose Fritz, Debra Kemmerer, Brenda Hawk, Joan Madden, Janet Smith, Marilyn McCloud, Ellen Kresge, Ray Smith, Kyle Frable, Diane Bonser, Shirley Smith, Edith George, Doris Neumeyer, Janet Gower, Joyce Gower, Conner Brawley, Gabrielle Collins, Gene Borger, Sharlee Ahner, Ronald Frantz, Sheila Sherer, Margaret and Larry Hahn, Hudson Stewart, Conner Bittenbender, Marlene Long, Roberta Heffley, Mike Heller, and Brian Holderman (Wendy Peddigree's brother), Barry Serfass (Brenda Hawk's brother)

Thank you to Pastor Tom for leading our service today.

The Property Committee walked through the basement and saw the need to clean up/organize or clean out. All committees, please take the time to attend to your areas. Whatever is not removed or organized by April 13th will be thrown out.

The Men's Group will meet on April 13th at 8:00am to help with service projects.

April 13th is clean-up day for the basement, cemetery and grove starting at 9:30am.

Volunteers are needed for the Children's Church and the nursery during the service.

There is a box on the table by the flower book for your questions for the Town Hall meeting on April 14th. Renee will forward the questions to Pastor Mike so he can prepare to answer your questions at the meeting.

Bishop Randy will be our guest pastor on April 21st. He is also planning to stick around for about an hour after the service to answer any follow-up questions that you may have after the Town Hall meeting.

Pastor Mike will be including information and resources in the bulletin to help us learn more about the EC and come up with questions for our Town Hall meeting on April 14th and the follow-up with Bishop Randy on April 21st.

Eldred Twp. Spring Clean Up weekend is April 19th and 20th. A flyer is hanging in the office on the bulletin board if you want more information.

St. Matthews United Church of Christ

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